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Bay Area News Roundup Local news all the time

Monday, September 17, 2001

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Bay City News Report

(09-17) 14:00 PST -- Civic and religious leaders are gathering in San Francisco today to lead a massive public service to honor victims of Tuesday's violence on the East Coast.

Titled "San Francisco Day of Remembrance: A Ceremony for Bay Area Residents of All Races, Religions and Backgrounds," the noontime event at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in the Civic Center is expected to attract as many as 7,000 people. Today's event follows many smaller gatherings around the Bay Area held in response to the devastating crashes of hijacked planes into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington,

D.C.

The program, which includes address by Gov. Gray Davis, U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein and other top political and religious leaders, is intended to express condolences and inspire a commitment to the spirit of peace in a diverse society. Leaders of Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations are participating.

For security reasons, the Civic Center Parking Garage is closed and a number of streets in the vicinity are shut down until 3 p.m.: Larkin Street between Hayes and McAllister streets; Polk Street between Hayes and Golden Gate Avenue; Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Hyde Street; McAllister between Van Ness and Larkin; and Fulton Street between Larkin and Hyde.

The city's Department of Parking and Traffic is rerouting traffic onto Hayes Street as well as Van Ness and Golden Gate avenues, along with Turk and Hyde streets.

Pacific Stock Exchange officials said this morning that all systems were running smoothly under heavy

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trading, but a look at individual share prices shows the terrorist attacks have been particularly bad for the airline industry.

Exchange spokesman Dale Carlson said the exchange was notably lower this morning just like other major exchanges such as the New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq Exchange, which were both down about 5 percent. But that was expected before trading opened, he said.

Trading was extremely heavy, Carlson said, but it does not appear likely that they will break their all-time record of shares bought and sold.

"Things are going better than we could have hoped," Carlson said. "There's been no panic."

Locally, technology and biotechnology companies were holding their ground, although they are posting losses. As of 10 a.m., shares of San Jose's Cisco Systems were down 1.5 percent, Redwood Shores-based Oracle saw a 2 percent decline and South San Francisco's Genentech was down less than 1 percent. This was good news for the beleaguered technology industry, but the largest employers at Bay Area airports have been hammered.

United Airlines, which is the largest carrier at San Francisco International Airport and reportedly employees more than 20,000 people in the Bay Area, saw its stock price fall this morning by 38 percent. Delta Airlines, which is the next largest carrier at SFO, saw its share price fall 39 percent. Other carriers at SFO, such as Continental and U.S. Airways, watched their shares fall by 50 percent and 42 percent, respectively.

As a result of falling share prices, increased security costs and a drop in passenger demand, the airlines are taking drastic steps to avoid declaring bankruptcy.

United Airlines said it is reducing its nearly 2,400 flights per day to around 1,900 and Continental said it would reduce its scheduled flights by 20 percent. Continental also announced this weekend that it would lay off 12,000 of its more than 56,000 employees.

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All three Bay Area airports were this morning getting back to the business of directing air traffic and handling passengers under strict security, nearly a week after the hijackings and crashes on the East Coast.

Oakland International Airport spokeswoman Jo Murray reported this morning that airport operations are running smoothly.

Murray said the airport is handling about 90 percent to 95 percent of the flights that it handled before the closure, and that the crowds at the airport are "very light."

In order to comply with new safety regulations imposed by the Federal Aviation Administration that prohibit any vehicle from parking within 300 feet of the terminal, the airport has closed off its short-term parking lot, Murray said.

Those needing short-term parking are being detoured to the long-term lots, said Murray, and travelers should follow the signs that are in place at the facility.

Murray said that airport officials are meeting later this week to determine how to reconfigure the short-term parking lot to meet the new FAA regulations.

Murray said airport officials are asking travelers to arrive at least two hours before their designated time of departure, but she noted that travelers should call their airlines to see if there are further procedures for checking-in.

In San Jose, airport officials said operations are also getting back up to speed.

"We're looking at about 75 percent of operations right now," airport spokeswoman Noelle Knell said this morning.

Both domestic and international flights are taking off and landing now and Knell said only one flight -- an American Airlines plane headed to Paris -- has been canceled today.

Travelers are still urged to call their carriers before

heading out to the airport, and only confirmed, ticketed passengers will be allowed through security checkpoints and into the gate area.

U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, spent the morning at San Jose's Pioneer High School sharing stories and answering questions from students following Tuesday's terrorist attacks on the East Coast.

The congressman described some of his earliest memories of being housed in a Japanese internment camp following the attack on Pearl Harbor. He said he does not want the same thing to happen to Arab Americans in light of last week's airplane hijackings and attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Honda also took comments and answered questions from a group of more than 100 students who were hand picked to attend the assembly, based on their hours of work in the community.

The students and the congressman seemed to share a sense of pride they have felt in watching the nation come together. Honda said he hoped that pride would stay intact.

"This thing brought out the most courageous part of our spirit," he said. "Staying strong and bonding is the way to overcome this."

We are a family, he said, "even though we have different colored skins and different places of worship."

An Alameda man charged with sex offenses against two young Santa Rosa girls he allegedly met via the Internet pleaded innocent to the charges in a Santa Rosa courtroom this morning.

A preliminary hearing for Brian Balfour Henaghan was set for Oct. 24 in Sonoma County Superior Court.

Henaghan, 22, is in the Sonoma County Jail in lieu of \$150,000 bail. He allegedly committed three lewd acts with a 12-year-old girl and forcibly raped a 14-year-old girl.

His attorney, Jamie Thistlethwaite, refuted police

allegations that as many as 150 young girls in the Bay Area were contacted by Henaghan over the Internet.

She said that less than a dozen Sonoma County girls allegedly were contacted and all but two said nothing happened. She also refuted the allegation that the 14-year-old girl was raped by force.

Henaghan was released on the charges regarding the 12-year-old girl after posting \$60,000 bail, but was arrested again after the parents of the 14-year-old alleged victim saw a news article about Henaghan and questioned their daughter.

University of California, Santa Cruz officials say they'll be celebrating a milestone at the Former Fort Ord military base in Monterey today.

University officials will be dedicating the Monterey Bay Education, Science and Technology Center's new headquarters building. The 26,000-square-foot complex will be home to the center's administrative offices, UCSC Extension, the City of Marina Small Business Center and a variety of other businesses.

The new center is designed to be the cornerstone of the Fort Ord Redevelopment Plan and aims to foster regional economic development and job creation by establishing a community of high-tech businesses.

"We are celebrating not only a beautiful new building, but also the exciting new partnerships that made it possible," said UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood. "UCSC and our collaborators are opening new doors to research, technology and economic development."

The construction was funded by grants from the federal Economic Development Administration and the Community Development Block Grant program, along with other grants.

Center Director Lora Martin, U.S. Rep. Sam Farr, D-Carmel, Marina Mayor Jim Perrine, and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Regional Director of the Economic Development Administration Dianne Church will be joining Greenwood at 10 a.m. today at the new center on Fort Ord.

A communications tool developed at NASA's Ames Research Center could soon allow air traffic controllers, emergency dispatchers and teachers to listen to multiple conversations at once.

A Los Angeles-based company is preparing to market the Ames Spatial Auditory Display communication tool commercially. The tool was originally developed for the space program to allow mission control operators to listen to multiple conversations at once.

"The NASA flight director at mission control in Houston is sometimes required to listen to and understand as many as seven different voices at the same time," Dr. Durand R. Begault of Ames Research Center said. "Traditional communications systems involve listening to multiple voices with only one ear, which is disadvantageous for speech intelligibility."

Begault is the original developer of the tool. It makes radio communications more easily understood by taking advantage of people's natural ability to localize sounds.

"Our everyday ability to listen to one desired voice out of a collection of different voices is known as the 'cocktail party effect,' which depends on two-ear listening to separate the sounds in space. The ASAD simulates this by effecting directional cues for each input based on time and level differences at the ears," Begault said.

Los Angeles-based BreakAway Sound hopes to have the tool available commercially by 2003. It is expected to have applications in air traffic control, emergency communication, virtual conferencing, distance education and in the entertainment industry, according to Ames' technology commercialization manager David Lackner.

"This is a great example of NASA's ability to work with private industry to commercialize dual-use technology. I look forward to creating more partnerships like this one, where we achieve tangible benefits in cooperation with dynamic entrepreneurs," Lackner said.

The National Weather Service forecast low clouds

and fog this morning with local drizzle at the coast in the San Francisco Bay Area, all of which are expected to clear by noon.

Highs are expected from the 50s at the coast to the lower 80s in the warmest inland areas.

An afternoon sea breeze is forecast at 10 to 20 mph.

Tonight should be mostly clear, with the exception of coastal fog and low clouds.

Lows should be in the upper 40s to mid-50s. An evening sea breeze is forecast at 10 to 25 mph.

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